Medicine Hat
The Gas City

MEDIA RELEASE

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MEDICINE HAT'S QUALITY OF LIFE RATED HIGH

Small city feel what residents like most about living in Medicine Hat

Medicine Hat – The City of Medicine Hat now has a way of determining what the residents of Medicine Hat consider important indicators for their quality of life.

During late 2006 and early 2007 a Quality of Life study was conducted in Medicine Hat. The purpose of the study was to learn what Medicine Hat residents mean when they say that Medicine Hat is a good place to live. What factors make it "good"?

Survey results indicated that, overall, residents feel they enjoy a good quality of life in Medicine Hat. Close to three-quarters of respondents rated their quality of life as either "excellent" or "very good" (71 per cent combined), almost one quarter (24 per cent) rated it as "good", and only five per cent rated it as "fair" or "poor" (combined).

"People value the quality of life in Medicine Hat," says Mayor Garth Vallely. "They feel that Medicine Hat is a great place to live. We now have the ability to measure our efforts to know if we are moving in the right direction, to assess the effectiveness of current policies and to set priorities for the future."

An Alberta based research and evaluation company, Howard Research & Management Consulting Inc., was contracted to develop the Quality of Life indicators for Medicine Hat. A four-stage consultation process was used, including in a telephone survey with more than 1,000 Medicine Hat residents.

Results of the study include identification of 10 factors that influence the quality of life in Medicine Hat, including:

- Safety
- Prosperity/Independence/Mobility
- Health
- Neighbours/availability of supports
- Municipal Government
- Hopefulness/emotional well-being/future opportunities
- Environmental concerns
- Recreation and Culture
- Social supports/inclusion and poverty
- Education

- more -

Sixty-six indicators relating to the 10 factors become the benchmarks for future measurement and complete the Medicine Hat Quality of Life Instrument.

"A research-based assessment tool now exists to facilitate ongoing monitoring of Medicine Hat residents' perspectives on indicators that make the most difference to their quality of life," says Karen Charlton, Social Development Manager. "Quality of life information should be collected approximately every year as part of municipal planning processes."

Survey respondents were also asked to respond to several open-ended questions that related to what they liked most about living in Medicine Hat. What respondents liked most (in descending order) was:

1. The small town / small city feel
2. The size
3. The people
4. The city in general
5. Accessibility (convenient to get around)

"Thank you to all the residents of Medicine Hat who participated in the focus groups and the telephone survey," adds Vallely. "Their input was essential in gathering this data and in developing the assessment tool which will help us maintain our high quality of life."

An Executive Summary Report of the Quality of Life Study can be found on the City's website, www.medicinehat.ca or can be obtained through the City Clerk department, Second Floor, City Hall.

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